

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Small Town, Big Dreams

Tucker Kraft's
Road to the NFL

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Action

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The Gong Show



Dick Johnson
General Manager

Who remembers the Gong Show from back in the mid-seventies? I think the numbers are about split in half with our members who may remember the show. I know our *Cooperative Connections* editor will have to research it to know what it is! The Gong Show ran for many years and each show presented a competition of amateur performers of many time dubious talent, with a panel of three celebrity judges. If any judge considered an act to be horrendous, they would jump up and hit a large gong to stop the act. If the act made it through

the gong, they would be judged on a scale of 1-10.

I think about the gong show as an analogy to the recent South Dakota legislative session. There were some good acts, (bills) and some acts that the cooperatives jumped up and hit the gong long and hard to stop from becoming law.

Our biggest gong and victory was HB1126. That bill was introduced by the railroads to raise the fees for crossing their tracks with our power lines. It would have nearly doubled the current one-time crossing fee from \$750 to \$1,400. That wasn't the worst part; they wanted to charge us to cross in public right of way. That would have opened a whole new can of worms, so we quickly hit the gong. The utilities and railroads

have been similar to a bad act for many years. In 2014 we battled and tried to reach a deal on crossing fees and other issues. That time the Legislature gonged us telling us to go to the table and get an agreement hammered out. We could never reach an agreement, so a bill was passed in 2016 putting in a one-time fee of \$750 and other requirements as to timely filing.

Another issue that the utilities were involved with were the many eminent domain bills. There were six in all, and I believe most all of them were killed. While we did not gong them we did give them scores. Those bills were all a part of the CO2 pipelines proposed east of the river. Electric utilities are allowed the use of eminent domain to acquire property for new power lines. We have never in our 83-year history used eminent domain that I am aware of, and hope we never have to. However, electric utilities must be certain we still have the ability to utilize eminent domain in the future. 292301

The final one was called a "ban the ban" bill. In many areas of the country, local governments are banning natural gas appliances. Some of the gas utilities were attempting to get in front of that in South Dakota and make sure the local governments won't be allowed to ban gas appliances. They included in the bill electric utilities as well, but we felt we should not be included and weren't in the final bill.

As you can see, we got out the big mallet to gong some of the bills while many others were just monitored closely. A special thanks goes to our lobbying team from SDREA as well as our Rushmore and West River Electric teams. To all the legislators and lobbyists who take time from their schedules to be in the Legislature, I greatly appreciate all you do. It is not an easy job.

Have a great spring and STAY SAFE!

APRIL IS NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH
Know What's Below!

Call 811 at least two business days prior to digging if you are digging more than 18 inches into the ground.

811 service is free of charge. They will send a professional to your home or business to locate all underground Utilities.

By calling 811, you are preventing damages to underground utilities by an accidental dig-in.

Failure to call 811 before you dig could result in an unintentional dig-in, leading to repair costs, utility outages, severe injury or death, and you could be fined.

West River Electric Association, Inc.
Your Techno-Edge Cooperative
"Powering You For A Brighter Future"

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WEST RIVER ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 675-840)

Our Mission:

We are safety conscious, community oriented, and the trusted energy expert for our member owners.

Our Vision:

We will achieve an ACSI score of 90 by 2024.

Our Values:

1. Safety
2. Accountability
3. Integrity
4. Innovation
5. Commitment to Community

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board President: Andy Moon Board of Directors

Stan Anders – Vice President
Jamie Lewis – Secretary
Larry Eisenbraun – Treasurer
Jerry Hammerquist
Howard Knuppe
Marcia Arneson
Chuck Sloan
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Other correspondence to: West River Electric Cooperative Connections, 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD 57703; telephone (605)393-1500, Exts. 6519, 6531 or 6522; fax (605)393-0275; e-mail robert.raker@westriver.coop.

Cooperative Principle 4: Autonomy and Independence (AKA Local Control)



Amanda Haugen
Communications
Specialist

Cooperatives are organizations that are founded on a set of principles that aim to promote democracy, equality, and cooperation among their members. The fourth cooperative principle is Autonomy and Independence, which is crucial to the success of any cooperative. In other words, we believe in local control.

Autonomy and independence recognizes that cooperatives are voluntary organizations that are owned and controlled by their members. As such, they have the right to make their own decisions without any outside interference. Who knows what is best for the member owners of West River Electric, a local board whom they elect or outside investors or shareholders? 824100

Local control is fundamental to the success of a cooperative, as it allows the organization to operate in a way that is uniquely tailored to the needs of its members. By empowering members to make decisions about the direction of the organization, through their vote, the cooperatives directly represent the members' interests.

This principle also allows cooperatives to be more responsive to the needs of their members. Because they are not beholden to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives can make decisions quickly and efficiently, without having to seek approval from a higher authority.

Autonomy and independence also helps to foster a sense of community among members. By giving members a say in the direction of the organization, cooperatives encourage a sense of ownership and investment in the success of the cooperative. This can lead to greater engagement among members, as well as a stronger sense of being a member-owner rather than a customer.

At the same time, however, this principle must be balanced against the need for cooperation and collaboration. While members have the right to make decisions about the direction of the organization, they must also be willing to work together to achieve common goals. This requires a willingness to compromise and to work towards consensus, even when there are competing interests at play. In other words, members must ask what is best for the cooperative as a whole versus what is best for me. Our country would be a better place with more of way of thinking. This reminds of the JFK quote; "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

In summary, the fourth cooperative principle, autonomy and independence, is a crucial element of any successful cooperative. By empowering members, through board elections, to make decisions about the direction of the organization, cooperatives can ensure that their activities directly align with their members' interests. More importantly, these principles foster a sense of community and cooperation among members.

Workplace Safety: Avoid Common Electrical Hazards

Contact with or exposure to electricity is one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities. Follow these tips to avoid electrical injury:

Overhead Power Line Contact

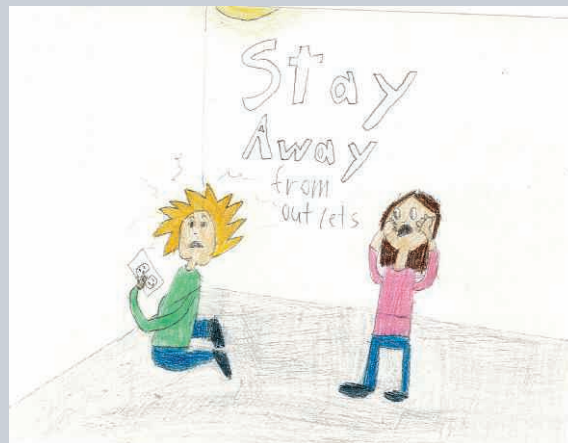
- 46% of all electrical fatalities are caused by contact with overhead power lines
- 57% of overhead power line fatalities were in non-electrical occupations
- Always assume all lines are live and dangerous
- Always look up; be aware of overhead power lines
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines
- Do not touch anything that is in contact with overhead power lines
- Carry equipment, including ladders, horizontally to avoid contact with power lines
- Stay at least 35 feet away from downed lines

Accidental Contact with Energized Conductors or Parts

- 45% of all electrical fatalities were caused by working on or near energized conductors or parts
- 74% of these fatalities were in electrical occupations
- Always test for voltage before you perform work. Be sure to also test the area around the equipment you are working on to avoid accidental contact with energized equipment
- Always perform a site and risk assessment before conducting work. Hazards exist on and near the equipment you are working on
- When possible, turn off power before conducting work
- Follow proper lockout / tagout procedures
- Avoid complacency. Every job is different, make sure you follow the hierarchy of controls and other electrical safety work practices on every job

Electrical Safety in the Workplace

- 69% of all electrical fatalities involved non-electrical occupations
- Know when to say when. If you feel unsafe performing a job, say something
- Be aware of potential electrical hazards in the workplace. Avoid electrical rooms and other potentially hazardous areas
- All electrical work should be completed by qualified workers with proper training
- GFCI protection should be installed where electricity and water may come in contact
- Five sources accounted for 92% of all electrical fatalities
 - Overhead power lines
 - Unexpected contact with electricity
 - Working on energized parts
 - Ground faults
 - Damaged wiring



Power Line Safety

Serena Dekrey, age 9

Serena Dekrey, age 9, gives wise advice to readers on electrical safety. She cautions us to be careful around power outlets. Serena is the daughter of Don and Cassandra Dekrey, members of Sioux Valley Energy based in Colman, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

COMFORTING CASSEROLES

PHEASANT CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 pheasant
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- Bacon grease
- 1/2 cup flour
- 4 cups milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

METHOD

Mix flour, salt, pepper, and roll pieces of pheasant in the mixture. Brown in bacon grease. In separate pan, mix butter, milk, and 6 T flour. Stir and bring to a boil. Pour over the pheasant that had been put in a baking dish with bacon laid over it. Bake until tender.

Gail Klipfel
Ellendale, N.D.

TACO CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 package taco seasoning mix
- 1 can (16 ounces) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 can (11 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup crushed tortilla chips

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brown meat in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Stir in seasoning mix, beans, tomato sauce and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spoon into 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and tortilla chips. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with assorted toppings, if desired.

mccormick.com

CHICKEN, BROCCOLI, AND RICE CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. chicken tenders
- 1 cup long grain rice
- 1 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tsps. garlic powder
- 2 tsps. onion powder
- 1 1/2 tsps. whole rosemary leaves, crushed
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread chicken and rice in greased 2-quart baking dish. Mix stock, milk and seasonings in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slow pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Capital Credit Allocations

Each member who was on service in 2022 will receive a capital credit allocation notice (see example on right) in the mail during April. West River Electric is a not-for-profit organization owned by you, its members. The revenue that covers day-to-day operating costs of the cooperative comes directly from members paying their monthly electric bills. Member rates provide:

- A sufficient amount of revenue to cover all operating costs,
- Funds for capital requirements, such as trucks, equipment and other items not funded by the RUS loans,
- Sufficient income to meet our financial needs set by our lenders,
- Revenue for additional capital items to keep pace with growth.

Revenue over the amount needed to keep the co-op operating is called a “margin.” These margins are allocated in the spring of each year based on the amount of electricity you have used for the previous year, (your patronage), and are called “capital credits.” The allocation notice you receive will state your balance before the 2022 allocation. In the middle, it shows the amount that has been credited to your capital credit amount for the year 2022 for each service location you have on service. In the end, it will show your total capital credits allocated to date. These capital credits provide equity for the co-op and you. As a reminder, this allocation notice cannot be cashed, nor can it be used as a credit on your energy account.

On the notice, you will notice line items listed as “COOP,” “G&T,” and “DGC.” The “COOP” line is for the margins derived strictly from West River Electric. The “G&T” line is for the margins that have been allocated by our power suppliers, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, (BEPC) of which we, West River Electric, are members. The “DGC” line is for margins that BEPC derived from the coal gasification plant that BEPC owns, called Dakota Gasification Company, (DGC). “DGC” allocated a margin in 2008 when they had high natural gas prices resulting in a large margin. If you don’t have a dollar amount indicated for this line item, you would not have been on service with us in 2008. 917200

Each year, the board of directors review the financial condition of West River Electric to determine if a capital credit “retirement” (payment of capital credits) will be possible for the year. If one is approved, you will find this information in the October edition of the *Cooperative Connections*. If you have further questions, please contact our offices at, Wall: 605.279.2135, or Rapid: 605.393.1500, or by email at info@westriver.coop.

0000114291//.



West River Electric Association, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

PO Box 412
Wall, SD 57790-0412

Wall Office
1200 W. Fourth Ave.
PO Box 412
Wall, SD 57790-0412
(605) 279-2135
Visit us at:
www.westriver.coop
24-Hour Automated Attendant:

Rapid City Office
3250 E Hwy 44
Rapid City, SD 57709
(605) 393-1500

(605)791-6555

2242 1 AV 0, 471 5 2242
Jane Doe C-4
John Doe
1234 Capital Credit St
RAPID CITY SD 57703-7081

RE: Capital Credit #
123456

Page 1 of 1

Capital Credit Allocation Notice THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PAYMENT

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Prior Years Balance: COOP | 107.88 |
| G&T | 28.88 |
| DGC | .00 |
| | \$ 136.76 |

You are part owner of West River Electric Association, Inc. and one way your ownership is reflected is through capital credits -- your share of what's left over after the co-op pays all its expenses.

| CAPITAL CREDIT STATEMENT Calendar Year 2022 | | | |
|--|-----------|------|-----------------|
| Location | Patronage | Type | Capital Credits |
| 1234 | 1,510.69 | COOP | 30.43 |
| | 1,510.69 | G&T | 90.35 |
| Totals allocated for Jan. 1, 2022 - Dec. 31, 2022: | | | 120.78 |

Every month, you pay your bill for electric service, and the co-op pays the expenses incurred in providing that service. Any funds left over at the end of the year -- margins -- provide equity for the co-op and you, the member. These funds are allocated each year based on the amount of electricity you have used for the previous year (patronage) and are called “capital credits.” Allocated capital credits are considered “unretired” until the Board of Directors “retire” a portion of the capital credits, which normally happens annually in September.

We retain the unretired capital credits for two reasons: (1) as working capital to keep the co-op financially sound and to allow for emergencies, such as storm damage that might require replacement of poles and power lines; and (2) to retire debts and build equity in the co-op.

Be sure to keep the Cooperative informed of your correct address so that you continue to receive your notices and future refunds. If you move, we recommend that you update your current address with us every five years.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Unretired Capital Credits: COOP | 138.31 |
| G&T | 119.23 |
| DGC | .00 |
| | \$ 257.54 |

Unretired capital credits cannot be applied to your past due or current energy bill or payment for any other services provided by your cooperative.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

West River Electric exists for the purpose of providing its members with electric service on a non-profit basis. All excess margins are allocated back to its members.

KEEP THIS STATEMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS





Youth Excursion 2023

All-Expense Paid Trip:
JULY 24-27, 2023
BISMARCK, ND



Deadline to apply: June 16th at 5pm

River Boat Cruise

Students will get the opportunity to go on a scenic cruise down the Lewis and Clark River.

Swimming

Students will get the opportunity to relax and have fun at the Rivers Water Park.

Tours

Students will have the opportunity to tour Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine, and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant.



SCAN ME
TO LEARN
MORE AND
TO SIGN
UP!



West River Electric Association, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
"Powering You For A Brighter Future"

- Any high school student in 9th, 10, or 11th grade is eligible to attend
- Students parents or guardians must be members of WREA

TUCKER KRAFT



Kraft refuses to go down amongst a group of Redbird defenders.

Tucker Kraft's Road to the NFL

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

With a population of 500 residents, Timber Lake, S.D., may seem similar to many small-town communities across the state. The town is known for its scenic beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and rich history. However, what really sets Timber Lake apart from the rest is a homegrown NFL prospect: Tucker Kraft.

At an impressive 6-foot-5 and weighing 254 pounds, Kraft has proven himself to be South Dakota's latest up-and-coming football star. Ask any fan of college football and they will tell you that Kraft has the size and skill set to make waves on a professional level.

Luckily, Kraft's talents haven't gone unnoticed. During his latest breakout season as SDSU's All-American tight end, Kraft left an impression on NFL

scouts with his ability to outrun opponents, snatch incredible catches and charge through multiple tackles. A top contributor in nearly every game, Kraft led the Jackrabbits to their first-ever FCS National Championship. The historic season quickly cemented Kraft's place as a top tight end in the NFL Draft.

Kraft recalls the moment everything fell into place: "I just realized that when I had the ball, no one could touch me," he said. "I knew after that season that I was completely capable of playing with the pros."

Timber Lake High School head football coach Ryan Gimbel says he is not surprised to see his former stu-



Tucker Kraft

dent and player on the doorstep of the NFL. Countless hours in the weight room and gym, he said, revealed Kraft to be a student-athlete with incredible drive.

“Seeing the raw natural talent of Tucker spoke for itself and what he could accomplish, but he also had the dedication to take it to that next level,” said Gimbel. “To me, it wasn’t a surprise, and that was our running joke when he left high school – ‘I’ll see you playing on Sundays.’”

Kraft’s journey to the NFL, however, was not without its fair share of adversity. Growing up in Timber Lake, Kraft lost his father to a plane crash when he was only 12 years old. Kraft overcame the childhood tragedy with his two brothers and mother by working tirelessly on and off the field. Honoring his father’s legacy, Kraft followed in his father’s footsteps to become an All-American college star like his father had done before him.

“My brothers took a big part in raising me after my dad died,” said Kraft. “My mom, my aunts and uncles all played a role, but I pride myself on getting a lot of things done independently.”

Steely determination has carried Kraft to the highest level of football, and not even dramatic injury has been able to slow him down. In November Kraft officially declared his name in the NFL draft. Kraft’s friends and family cheered him on as he showed off his incredible strength and skill on national television at the NFL Combine. There, Kraft proved his ability to play alongside the likes of Dallas Goedert, Riley Reiff and South Dakota’s other pro footballers.

“I was kind of star-struck walking in,” said Kraft. “Sitting down with the head coaches of the NFL franchise, you realize that you are at this level now. This is a job interview.”

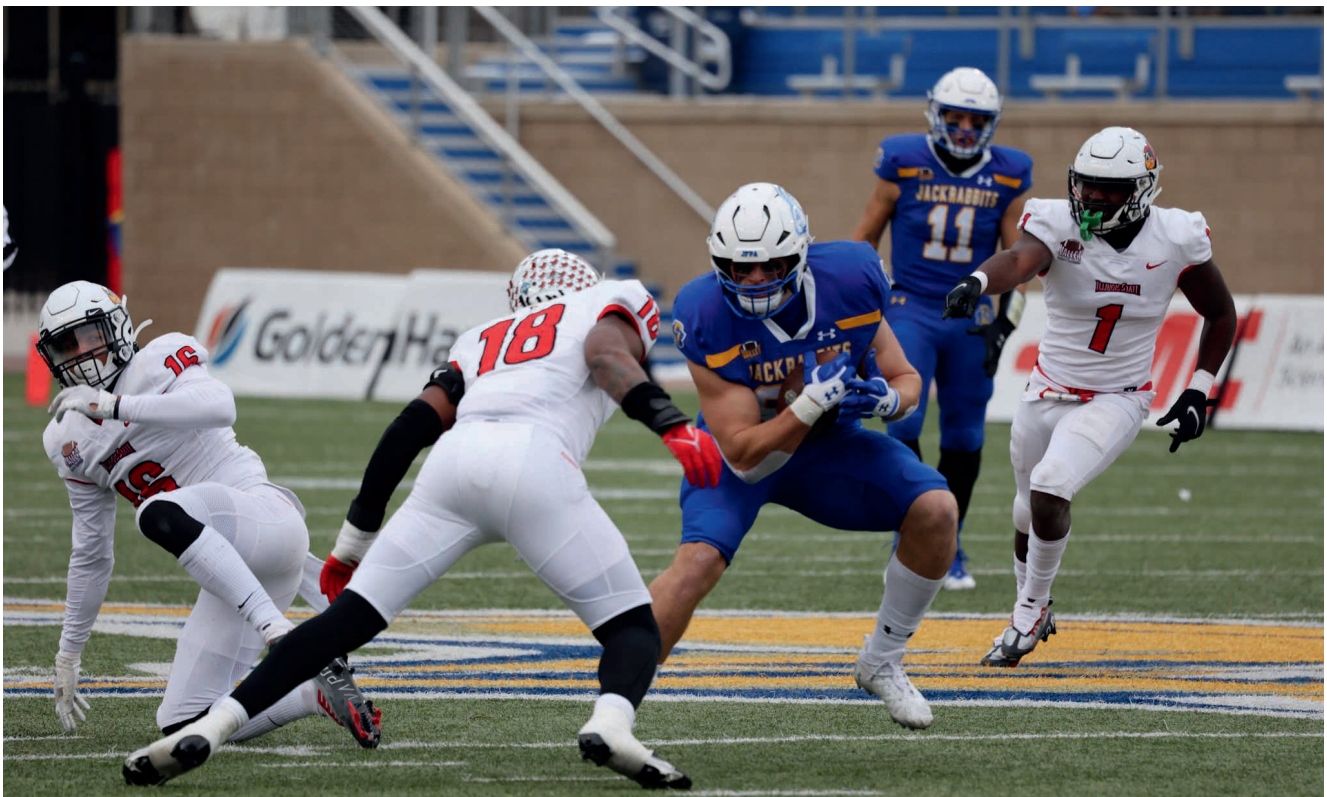
The NFL Combine, however, will

not be the last of Kraft’s time on national television. Ranked as the sixth top tight end, Kraft’s eyes are set on the draft in April. And, although he hails from somewhere small, Kraft plans to loom large on the field as a starting player with great potential.

“I want to go to a team that’s going to use me, whether I’m on the line of scrimmage in the trenches with the big guys or catching balls and getting yards after the catch. I want to make an impact on a team, day one.”

Whatever happens in April, Kraft’s hometown is ready to cheer him on. According to Gimbel, most of Timber Lake is ready to don colors and jerseys that they are not used to wearing to support their hometown kid.

“The buzz in our town has just erupted,” said Gimbel. “Our community, school, and family friends – they all want to see him be successful in the opportunity that he has worked for.”



NFL prospect Tucker Kraft evades a tackler, leading SDSU to a 31-7 win last November against the Illinois State Redbirds.

Commitment to the Member

Administrative Professionals Day is April 26



Amanda Haugen
Communications
Specialist

workplace. 866000

The day was first observed in 1952 as National Secretaries Week, and later expanded to include all administrative

Administrative Professionals Day is an annual celebration held on the last Wednesday of April to recognize and appreciate the hard work and dedication of administrative professionals in the

professionals. The day is now recognized in many countries around the world and is an opportunity for employers to show their gratitude to the unsung heroes who help to keep the wheels of the organization turning smoothly. At West River Electric, these men and women play an important part in bringing power to your home or business.

We have professionals who answer the phones, take payments, and work with members to set up work orders to bring the power lines to their homes or businesses. We have professionals who process payments, review billing reports, setup and close service orders, order poles and wires, obtain

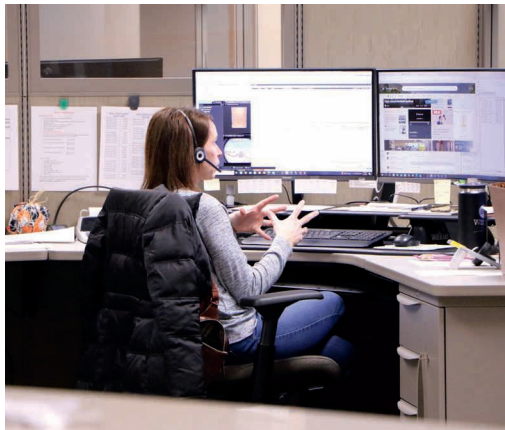
easements to run lines, accounts payable, and IT professionals who keep our computers and network up and running smoothly. We couldn't operate without all of the professionals listed above, and the many others that are a part of the organization.

In Western South Dakota and across the country, electric



cooperative Administrative Professionals' mission of helping others often extends beyond their commitment to their work at the co-op. West River Electric's employees are in the community, volunteering on the local ambulance or fire departments, working with the youth, and serving on local advisory boards, to name a few.

Wednesday, April 26 is Administrative Professionals Day. Given the dedication of West River Electric Administrative Professionals, please take a minute to say 'Thank You' for all they do for the community they serve.



Construction Report



Matt Schmahl
Construction
Manager

Spring is finally here, and if you have been around town, you probably have noticed all the construction zones starting to spring up around the area. Your local cooperative is gearing up for our construction season as well. If you have read the last couple of months of my construction reports, you've probably noticed several

large projects on which we have started to begin construction. This month is no exception. With the assistance of Kainz Construction, our line crews will begin installing an underground line heading north on Elk Vale Road. The new underground line will start at our newly constructed Eglin Substation and will head north to Seger Drive.

West River Electric has witnessed a considerable amount of development around the Exit 61 corridor in recent years, which is driving the need for the Eglin Substation and the addition of the underground lines that we will begin to install in the coming weeks. 876301

Minimal power disturbances are expected during the installation of these underground facilities along Elk Vale Road. If any disruptions are required, West River Electric will be in contact well in advance to schedule these interruptions with you.

The installation of these facilities will require numerous pieces of specialized equipment. This equipment will include but is not limited to, trenching equipment, backhoes, directional boring machines, cable reel trailers, digger trucks, and cable-pulling equipment.

The cable we will be installing is some of the largest



in production. We are installing this to accommodate the development that has already occurred and in anticipation of future growth. The staff at West River Electric are planning for these additional loads and designing for future needs now. This will ensure a reliable system now and well into the future!

Please remember that if you have any questions regarding the installation or the progress of the project, feel free to contact me at the Rapid City Office (605) 393-1500.





ELECTRIC SAFETY IN ACTION

In a controlled demonstration, Journeyman Lineman Brady Gaer uses life-size equipment on the high voltage demonstration trailer to educate students about electricity.

Empowering the Public to Stay Safe

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

Electric safety is a topic that South Dakota students are excited to engage with. They often ask questions like, “What should you do if your tractor equipment touches a power line?” or “How can birds sit safely on a power line?” or even “What does it look like when something comes in contact with high voltage?”

These are some of the most popular questions Oahe Electric’s Chief Financial Officer Valerie Marso has not only been answering but also demonstrating for more than 20 years.

“They always just have tons of questions,” said Marso. “It’s always fun to hear what they come up with next.”

It’s not just for entertainment, however. Oahe Electric and its employees are committed to realizing their goal of zero accidents at home and at work. Part of preventing tragedy starts with educating the public, especially youth, on how to stay safe around electricity.

In the last year alone, Oahe Electric traveled to nine different schools and led demonstrations for more than 900 students. For Marso, verbal communication is only half the battle when it comes to educating students

about electric safety. The real impact, she said, comes from showing them.

“The visuals and the noise that the high voltage makes really lands in a way that you just can’t convey with words,” said Marso. “It can scare the students a little bit, but I think it gives them a healthy respect for electricity.”

Co-op across the state, including Oahe Electric, use three different interactive safety demonstrations to hone their message about safety: Power Town, Co-ops in the Classroom and the high voltage demonstration trailer.

One of the most popular, Power Town, is a small-scale, tabletop model of a few quaint houses attached to a small power grid. The miniature electrical system shows students how electrical current moves through

various items they may encounter in their daily lives, presented in a fun and easy-to-learn format. Line-workers, who work on the real equipment every day, lead the demonstration and teach students about personal protective equipment worn by co-op employees to complete their jobs safely.

Co-op in the Classroom is yet another powerful initiative South Dakota co-ops engage in to promote safety across the state. Working in conjunction with East River's Education and Outreach Program, co-ops meet the students where they are in the classroom to teach local youth the importance of respecting electricity through hand-on lessons that engage and excite the audience.

Lastly, the high voltage demonstration trailer is a portable unit that carries life-size equipment from events to local schools. It's a demonstration that always leaves an impression. Within a safe environment, students get to see actual equipment, such as utility poles, electrical conductors and distribution transformers, in action. Each hour-long demonstration shows what can happen when objects such as animals, trees, ladders and even fruit come into contact with power lines.

"This is equipment that our linemen work on every day, so they are comfortable showing these students how energy works," said Marso.

These demonstrations not only

entertain, but also promote a healthy and safe environment for co-op members and the public. During one of Oahe Electric's latest outreach events, Marso recalled listening to a small group of kids talk about how they sometimes sit on "the green boxes." They were referring to underground transformers. It became a teachable moment that left an impact on both the students and teachers.

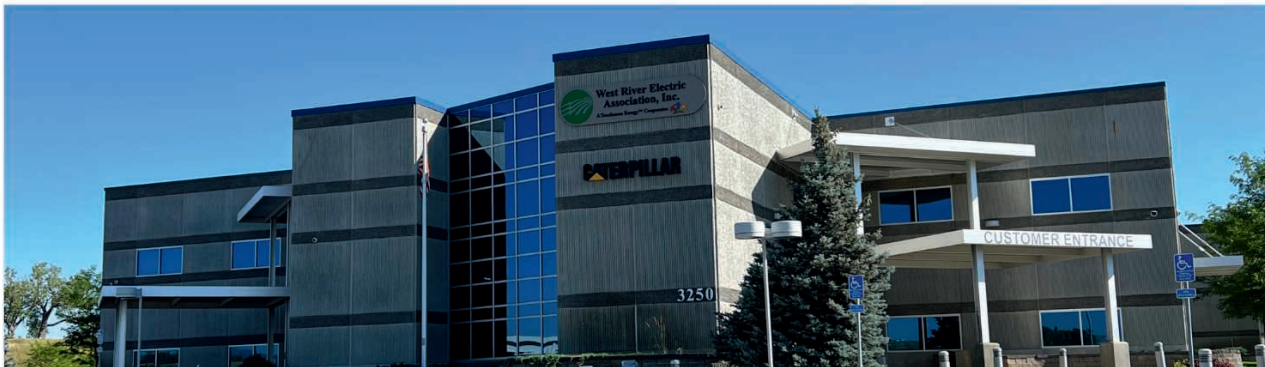
"We told them to never touch them," she said. "You never know what going on in there, and it's always better to be safe than sorry. It was at least one person who took something home and actually used it. Moments like that show we are really making an impact with these students."



Oahe Electric Power Supply Specialist Steve Long teaches electric safety using Power Town, a miniature model used in safety demonstrations.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SHINING THE LIGHT ON WEST RIVER ELECTRICS DEDICATED EMPLOYEES



LUCAS SCHREURS
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I have been with WREA 2.5 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

Rebuilding and maintaining underground and overhead power lines.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I love working with the employees and the members. They are what makes my job fun.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY SINCE STARTING WORK AT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

There are too many to remember but one that comes to mind is heading to JUTS with the rest of the crew that goes.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Family, Safety, and Community

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GET UP AND GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

Getting to work with the guys and the jobs are always a good time.



TRENT MADSEN
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING WITH WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

I have been with WREA for 1 year.

WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ENTAIL?

Rebuilding and maintaining underground and overhead power lines.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

Working with the people that I do that also care that everyone goes home to their families at the end of the day.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY SINCE STARTING WORK AT WEST RIVER ELECTRIC?

There's so many of them, it's hard to pick one. Everyday is always something different.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WEST RIVER ELECTRIC IN THREE WORDS?

Caring, motivated, and family

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO GET UP AND GO TO WORK EVERY DAY?

Making sure that the guys that I work with get home to their families as well as my own.

Work Zone Awareness Week

April 17-21, 2023, is a good time to learn more about work zone safety.

Electric Cooperatives play an essential role in providing electricity to rural communities across the United States. Streets and highways are lined with electrical poles and equipment which often requires crews, like West River Electric's, to place their equipment and trucks in or near traffic lanes.

Cars or trucks that speed through a work zone not only endanger workers on the ground, but also those up in the raised bucket. Driving too fast or too close to a work truck can cause the elevated worker's bucket to move or sway.

We at West River Electric encourage you to stay informed about work zones in your area and to take precautions when driving near them. This includes following posted speed limits, avoiding distractions, and being prepared for sudden stops or changes in traffic patterns. We also want to emphasize the importance of slowing down and being cautious when driving through work zones to prevent accidents and ensure the safety of our workers and the public.

Work Zone Awareness Week recognizes the importance of work zone safety and actively reminds the public to be cautious when driving through work zones and help ensure the safety of the workers and the community. Let us all be mindful of work zones

and observe work zone safety 365 days a year to ensure road safety.

To Help Keep Roadside Crews Safe:

1. Merge early and be courteous of other drivers
2. Go slow and be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable.
3. Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, equipment, and workers.
4. Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
5. Minimize all distractions. Avoid texting, operating the radio, eating, or digging in the backseat for something.



LOCATE YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER

If you locate your account number anywhere in this issue of West River Electric's *Cooperative Connections*, you will be a winner. There will be five account numbers placed randomly throughout the publication. If you spot your account number and notify our office before the 10th of the next month, you will receive a \$10 credit on your next bill.

WEST RIVER ELECTRIC OFFICE HOURS

RAPID CITY OFFICE

3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City, SD
Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
605-393-1500

WALL OFFICE

1200 W 4th Ave, Wall, SD
Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
605-279-2135

A night depository is available at both offices for your convenience.

SERVICE AND BILLING QUESTIONS?

Contact 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500 during office hours. E-mail us at info@westriver.coop for questions on your account.

OUTAGE OR EMERGENCY?

Contact 605-279-2135 or 605-393-1500 in the event of an outage or other emergency. Our calls are answered 24/7.



May 28, 2023
Back When They Bucked
 Days of '76 Arena
 Deadwood, SD
 800-344-8826

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

MAY 6
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 Lake Farley Park
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 6 p.m.
 Vivian, SD
 605-222-3296

MAY 20
Buggy Museum Open House
 10 a.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

MAY 20
Booth Day
 10 a.m.
 Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD
 605-642-7730

MAY 20
Frühlingsfest and Spring Market
 1 p.m.
 Main Street Square
 Rapid City, SD
 605-716-7979

MAY 25
Wine Walk
 5 p.m.
 Downtown Businesses
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-226-3441

MAY 26-28
Hidden Treasure Heritage Festival
 Lead, SD
 307-259-4484

MAY 27
Back When They Bucked All-Day Rodeo
 9 a.m.
 Days of '76 Event Complex
 Deadwood, SD
 605-717-7642

MAY 27
Norwegian Constitution Day
 11 a.m.
 Lake Norden, SD
 605-874-2171

JUNE 3
Health Connect of South Dakota: The Human Race 5K
 9 a.m.
 Sertoma Park
 Sioux Falls, SD

JUNE 11
River Honoring Community Potluck
 5 p.m.
 Clay County Park River Shelter
 Vermillion, SD
 605-670-0540

JUNE 16-18
Fine Arts In The Hills Show & Sale
 Main Street
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

JUNE 18
Father's Day Fishing
 10 a.m.
 Palisades State Park
 Minnehaha County, SD
 605-594-3824

JUNE 21
2023 McCrossan Boys Ranch Golf Classic for Kids
 Central Valley Golf Course
 Hartford, SD
 605-339-1203

JUNE 23
Flandreau Fridays
 5 p.m.
 Downtown Flandreau
 Flandreau, SD

Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.